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ABSTRACT

This document discusses the concept of a community school. Using all of the available community resources, a community school is a social service institution, and its basic goals and objectives are socially oriented. Within the parameters of a given community there exist many valuable sources of educational potential, both people and places, which can be incorporated into the instructional process from kindergarten through grade twelve and continuing into adult education. The best way for students to develop an awareness of their culture and to perceive their relationships to the collective society is for the school to provide them with opportunities for direct interaction with life space environments. Promoting a social experience curriculum does not minimize the importance or effect of of academic disciplines of study, but rather strives to incorporate out-of-school experiences into the total scope of formal learning. The community based school concept is one way by which students can gain awareness of their surroundings, can become directly exposed to the character of their community, and can develop personal, career, and social skills. The goals of such a school are: (1) developing awareness of individual responsibility; (2) learning cooperative social behaviors; (3) development of desirable social relationships; (4) development of respect for self and others; and (5) development and application of decision-making and problem-solving skills to contemporary issues. (JD)

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The Community Based School and Community Oriented Teachers: for Student Learning in the Real World of the 1970's

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Our schools cannot be expected to provide the kinds of experiences and information essential for its students unless the community is helping the school deliver them; for schools in isolation from the community do not possess the quantity of appropriate staff, tools, facilities, materials, and other resources required to offer the types and variety of experiences needed - if students are to have opportunities to acquire an understanding of themselves and their environment.[1]

In years past, social scientists and educational reformers, e.g., John Dewey, George Counts, Mary Kelty, Edgar Dawson, Charles Beard and Ernest Horn, argued for and demonstrated the feasibility of *community based learning*. At The University of Chicago's Laboratory School (1896) John Dewey envisioned the concept of the classroom as an *embryonic community*; a social environment setting in which students would role play the lifestyle of the real world community. This concept was later applied to the Gary, Indiana school system which developed a working model of Dewey's pedagogy for others to replicate.

Since the early 1900's much has been said and written about the merits of community based education. Advocates of community environmental awareness programs claim that direct student exposure to - and interaction with to the real world of the local community enhances student learning and concept development. Today, there exists, within the field of formal education, a renewed interest in *relevancy* to the abilities, interests, and personal/social needs of students - of all ages.

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[1] Reference to Staff Development Program for Promoting More Effective Use of Community Resources in Career Education (1974) Columbus, Ohio: The Center for Vocational Education.

The American education system is a social process and *an aspect of the total social development of the individual which attempts to insure that all youth leave school as better citizens*[2]. The community based school concept is one way by which formal education can become more-relevant to present students needs, the future goals of individuals, and to the *climate* of the times.

THE COMMUNITY BASED SCHOOL CONCEPT

What is a ***community school***? First, it is more than simply a building located within the geographical confines of a community. It is a *living* part of that community; a formalized social service agency which incorporates community resources - both people and places - into the program of instruction and provides needed services to community inhabitants such as adult education. Second, the community school constitutes an on-going learning process which is evidenced by an instructional curriculum geared to maximize student awareness of - and to achieve their exposure to the character and nature of the real world of the community, and which incorporates the multi-faceted character of that community into the learning process. Third, the structure of: community school is based on the perceptual concept of *communities*; a series of ever-expanding concentric circles of perceived/non-perceived, but real, natural/social communities.

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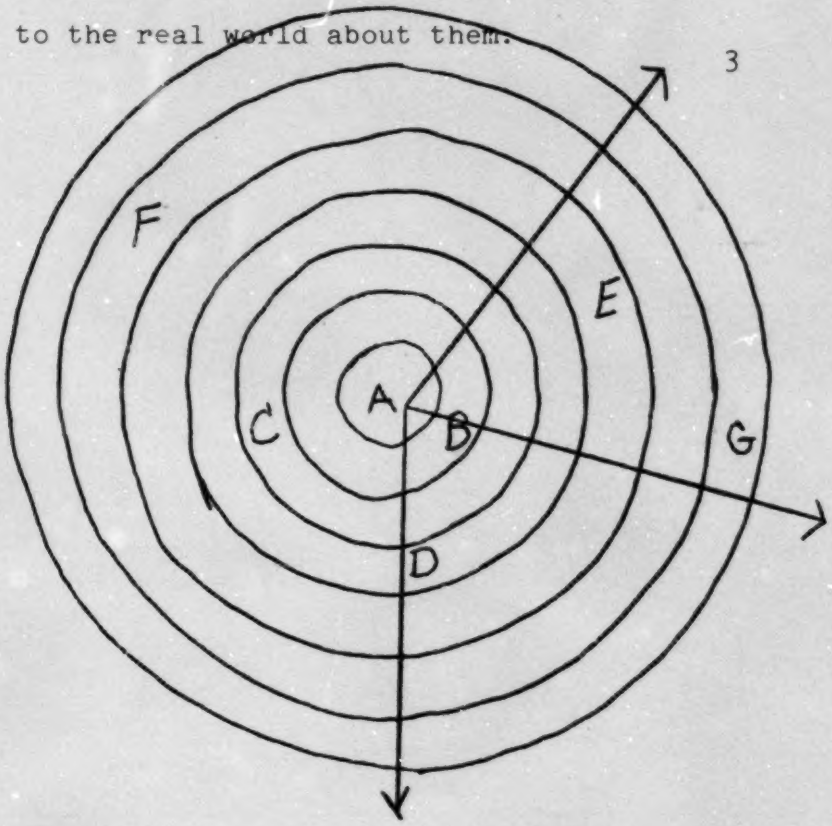
[2] Reference to J. H. Wykle in Career Education: For The 1970's (1976), Resources In Education (ERIC) ED122062

The ever-expanding perception of communities progresses outward from the family/home through stages of awareness and familiarity with the world-wide international community. This continually developing awareness of an expanding environment is contingent upon student experiences, maturation, awareness of the life space environment(s), and direct exposure to the real world about them.



In sum, a community school is a social service institution and its basic goals/objectives are socially oriented. The most common goals include:

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[3] The concept of community concentric circles includes (A) the family/home, (B) the school, (C) peer groups, (D) the local community; village, town or urban settings, (E) the state and region, (F) the nation, and (G) the several nations of the world which constitute the human brotherhood.

1. awareness of individual responsibility for one's own actions;
2. learning cooperative social behaviors;
3. development of desirable social relationships;
4. development of respect for self and others; and
5. the development and application of decision making and problem solving skills to contemporary issues.

A NEW THRUST FOR RELEVANT EDUCATION

In 1971, Sidney Marland (USOE) called for a new direction in American education and the *career education* bandwagon began to roll across the nation. The Houston movement stressed a renewed attempt to *rekindle pride in work* among elementary and secondary grade students. Attention was drawn to the interrelationship of SELF and education, positive work attitudes, role identification, self-image development, decision making skills, and positive attitudes toward others.

The field of *environmental education* is an attempt to relate the formal schooling process to the real world. Noel McInnis and others promote student exposure to the totality of surrounding life space environments; that is, to natural, social and/or human phenomena and settings. EE is an attempt to develop within individuals a sense of social competence and responsibility which carries over into areas of civic leadership. It is but one aspect of the *total socialization* of the individual which attempts to insure that students leave school as better citizens - equipped with a sense of stewardship.

There are several out-of-school setting experiences which enable students to:

1. develop a personal awareness of SELF in relationship to others;
2. gain exposure to the character and nature of the life space environment;
3. collect and discern natural, social and human data;
4. inquire individually and collectively using learned social science skills; and
5. make individual and collective decisions.

Within the parameters of a given community there exist valuable resources; both people and places, which can be incorporated into the instructional process; Kindergarten through grade twelve.

1. Resource people can visit classrooms as *guest speakers* and can serve as *elective mini course instructors* (for grades 9-12).
2. In the realm of K-12 community based learning, resource people can function as *field trip site guides*.
3. For secondary students, resource people can serve as short term *field based experience instructors* and as *training site supervisors*. Resource facilities can serve as *community based classrooms*.

Donald N. Morris[4] contends that in order to become responsible citizens of any level of human society, students must develop some general awareness of a society while increasingly developing more specific perceptions of their personal involvement in that society. Thus, the best way for students to develop an awareness of their culture and to perceive their relationship(s) to the collective society is for the school to provide them with opportunities for direct interaction with life space environments. The way by which student contacts and interactions with the several concentric circles of *community* can best be guaranteed is if the school promotes a social experience curriculum.

A social experience curriculum does not minimize the educational importance or effect of academic disciplines of study in the realm of student learning - but rather strives to incorporate out-of-school experiences into the total scope of formal learning set within the confines of a social setting and attempts to utilize the physical characteristics and facilities of resource sites, as well as the expertise and skills of community inhabitants, in an attempt to affect the student's cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development.

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[4] Reference to Donald N. Morris (1977) Global Education in Elementary Schools: Implication for Curriculum and Instruction. Washington, DC: National Council for the Social Studies.

STATEMENT

Relevancy in education is a contemporary goal - but not a new goal. What could be more fashionable today than the call to achieve life experience based upon student needs, interests and maturity levels (Kelty 1920's) or to study the economic, political and cultural factors which deeply influence and effect the individual and society (Beard 1932). Many *progressive* educators emphasize learning as a discovery process (Dewey 1900) and stress that the *method of study* utilized is of greater importance to learning than the knowledge acquired (Horn 1936).

There is a world existent outside the walls of the classroom that holds great educational potential for enriched student learning as well as preparation for life roles. It is a fact that each individual in our collective society performs several roles during the course of a lifetime, e.g., student, worker, family member, and citizen.[5]

Realize that the school cannot provide all the kinds of experience and information essential for all its students. The community based school concept is one way by which students can gain awareness of their surroundings, can become directly exposed to the character of their community, and can develop personal, career and social skills.

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[5] Reference to Career Education In Michigan: An Introduction (1975) Lansing: Michigan State Board of Education.

In order to incorporate the real world of the community into the instructional process there is a need to identify and to enlist the support, as well as the talents and facilities, of those community resource people and places that can contribute to the educational betterment of today's youth - tomorrow's social leadership.

THE TEACHER - THE ROLE

In order for any instructional program to be developed, adopted, implemented and successfully integrated into the existing school/classroom curricula there is a need for teacher understanding and commitment to the value of the program.

If an instructional program is community based, as in the case of career education and environmental education programs, then teachers must be community based as well. They must be exposed to the character and nature of communities both in their professional *pre-service* and *in-service* training programs. When engaged in training courses, as part of a degree program at the college/university level, students can be exposed to the community as part of their course work. They can be taken on field trips to resource sites, can be involved in short walk-throughs to certain parts of the total community, and can receive guest speakers in the classroom.

For those professionals in the field, a typical in-service program might consist of:

Workshops. All-day or half-day release time sessions which provide opportunities for personal skills development,

materials construction, *how-to-do-it* techniques, and program orientation as well as lesson/unit development.

Minishops. Two hour-or-less long enrichment activities concerned with materials introduction and *how-to-do-it* demonstrations.

Skillshops. Scheduled as follow-ups to workshops, skillshops are geared toward skills enrichment.

Field trips and tours. Opportunities for teachers to explore the natural, social and human resources within their communities for purposes of awareness, orientation and incorporation into the instructional process.

Guest speakers. Community resource people instruct teachers in skills application, develop teacher awareness regarding their occupations, and expose them to community resources.

Field based training. Pre-service and in-service teachers are placed at selected resource sites for purposes of skills acquisition and application as well as on-the-job training/experience.

Once teachers have been introduced to the real world of the given community, and possess an in-depth understanding of its character and functions, they can then be directly involved in instructional program development, implementation and documentation.

AREA OF STUDY: _____

GRADE(S): _____

CONCEPT: _____

GOAL(S)/OBJECTIVE(S): _____

_____

LESSON (ACTIVITIES): _____

_____

_____

MATERIALS: _____

_____

EVALUATION: _____

_____

SAMPLE LESSON
(format)

AREA OF STUDY: _____

COMPONENT: _____

NAME: _____ SCHOOL: _____

GRADE: _____

1. Date(s) of lesson/unit: _____
2. Subject of lesson/unit: _____
3. Materials/resources used: _____

   _____
4. Instructional Activities: _____

   _____
5. Suggested changes in lesson/unit: _____

   _____

   _____

SAMPLE DOCUMENTATION SHEET

(format)

One key *tool* used in this process of relating formal school education to the community (and vice versa) is the *resource directory* or *resource guide*. This locally developed and produced document contains the description of community resources; both people and places, who/which can be incorporated in the instructional program of the school - both in classrooms and in the field.

OCCUPATION: _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

_____

TELEPHONE: _____

CLASS PRESENTATION: (a brief description of the content and length of time of the resource person's classroom/field based presentation)

_____

SAMPLE RESOURCE GUIDE PAGE
(Resource Person)

SITE: _____ (name)

ADDRESS: _____

_____

PERSON TO CONTACT: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

SITE DESCRIPTION: _____

(a brief description of what constitutes the site tour; what students will see and/or do at the site)

TOUR TIME: _____

SAMPLE RESOURCE GUIDE PAGE
(Resource Site)

STATEMENT

If today's programs of instruction are to be relevant to both the student's and society's needs as well as being associated *with* the life of the community - as part of the life *of* the community, then classroom teachers must have an in-depth knowledge of the character of the community, must perceive the value of the community to the formal education process, and must actively work to incorporate community resource people and places into the Kindergarten through grade twelve process.

At both the *pre-service* and *in-service* training levels teacher awareness of and exposure to the community can be incorporated into programs of instruction. A combination of classroom and field based experiences will increase teachers' knowledge about and appreciation for the contribution that the local community; be it a village, town or city, makes to the lives of each of its inhabitants - and to the effects it has on their present and future beings.